(b) if so, the reasons therefor? and

(c) the savings in subsidy likely to be made on this account?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (c) Kerosene oil allocated to the States/Union Territories by the Central Government for distribution under the Public Distribution System (PDS) is meant for cooking and illumination. It is the responsibility of the State Government/Union Territory Administration concerned to distribute it among needy people in a judicious manner.

Hike in Prices of Petroleum Products

2388. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHAA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of petroleum products were hiked recently;

(b) if so, the reasons for such a decision; and

(c) the details of amount oil pool will get to reduce its deficit due to this decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) and (b) The Government have not hiked the basic ex-storage point prices of petroleum products recently. However, the retail selling prices of petrol, diesel and domestic LPG have gone up *with effect from* the midnight of 9th/10th November, 2001 due to the increase in dealers'/distributors' commission. The dealers' commission on petrol and diesel was increased by Rs.135/KL and Rs. 88/KL respectively. The distributors' commission on LPG (domestic) was increased by Rs. 1.02/cylinder.

(c) Since the increase in dealers'/distributors' commission has been passed on in consumer prices, it will not impact the oil pool account.

Wastage of Natural Gas

2389. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) the quantum of natural gas being flared up every day at different locations of the country;

(b) the reasons for flaring up the gas which can be used for development purposes; and

(c) the steps Government have taken to prevent the wastage of natural gas by flaring ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) to (c) At present around 4.4 Million Cubic Metre per day (MMSCMD) of natural gas is being flared, on an average, in all the oil and gas fields, both offshore and onland. Low pressure/ unutilized gas needs to be burnt, *i.e.* flared, keeping in view the safe operation of plants, safety of nearby areas and protection of the environment. This is so because if vented in the atmosphere, the unflared gas would pose a safety hazard and also create more pollution. In order to reduce gas flaring to the minimum practicable, the oil and gas producing companies are taking various measures, such as low pressure gas recovery, replacement of flaring systems, flare gas recovery and operational modifications.

Closure of gas cylinder manufacturing companies

†2390. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that several gas cylinder manufacturing companies in the country are on the verge of closure;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether Government are considering to take any steps to save them from closure ; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) to (c) In order to procure the LPG cylinders at competitive rates, Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies floated the tenders. The placement of order on the tenderers depends upon their qualification as per the terms and conditions of the tender. It is likely that some of the cylinder manufacturing units may not get the orders from the Oil Marketing Companies, if they do not qualify as per tender terms and conditions.

Allocation and supply of natural gas

2391. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA' : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.